

Recycling | Recycling at Central Arkansas Veterans Healthcare System

Central Arkansas Veterans Healthcare System



The Central Arkansas Veterans Healthcare System (CAVHS) identified more than 18 products used at the facility that could be reused or recycled. In FY 2006, CAVHS diverted approximately 765,669 pounds of waste from area landfills. The facility's recycling efforts helped to avoid over \$11,900 in landfill costs and generated over \$21,000 in revenue.

The environmental impact of CAVHS's efforts is impressive, including helping to save more than 5,000 trees, 2 million gallons of water, and 26,400 cubic feet of landfill space. The facility's community outreach and innovative programs have led to several environmental honors, including as a finalist for the Envy of Arkansas Award.

Environmental Management Systems (EMS) | Implementing EMS Throughout the Portland VA Medical Center

Portland VA Medical Center



The Portland VA Medical Center (PVAMC) takes an innovative and highly collaborative approach to implementing its Green Environmental Management System (GEMS) throughout the facility. Working through internal and external partnerships, PVAMC has made significant improvements in such areas as energy conservation, battery recycling, and solid waste reduction. Over the past 2 years, the facility recycled over 16.3 million pounds of waste. In FY

2006, the facility reached and maintained three objectives and targets: achieved 85 percent energy efficiency, thereby earning Energy Star® recognition; recycled 85 percent of alkaline and other batteries; and reduced purchasing of printing, writing, and miscellaneous paper by 5 percent and paper consumption by 10 percent. Through the creation of a chemical sampling database, PVAMC is better able to accurately assess and determine the environmental hazards associated with specific areas. The facility removed all methylene chloride containing products, e.g., paint removers and aerosol propellants, decreasing the possibility of exposure to toxic and suspected carcinogenic products. The facility's numerous outreach efforts include hosting environmental events involving the local community and creating a GEMS Web site and newsletter.

Honorable Mentions

Electronics Stewardship | Bits 'N' Bytes

Sharon Ricketts Williams and Patricia Edington, VA Illiana Health Care System

The VA Illiana Health Care System (VAIHCS) computer electronics procurement and reuse and recycling program demonstrates the facility's commitment to both electronics and environmental stewardship. In FY 2006, VAIHCS donated a total of 153 computer systems to authorized schools, providing up to \$18,360 in disposition cost avoidances. Outdated, though usable equipment is sanitized and reused by the facility's BioMed Shop where needed. Interservice coordination and cooperation are the keys to the success of the VAIHCS's "recycle through station reuse" program. In FY 2006, 392 Energy Star® rated desktop systems were placed in use at the facility, thereby reducing the equipment's energy consumption.

Environmental Management Systems | Improvements to the Veterans Health Administration (VHA) Green Environmental Management Systems (GEMS) – Enhancements to Compliance and Processes Tracking (CP-Track) and Environmental-Safety Automated Facility Evaluation (E-SAFE)

VHA Professional Advisory Group Members: Jack Staudt, Robert Matthes, Stephan Thomatos, Jessica Wolfgang, Martin Jones, William Kulas, Michael Henrickson, Tony Karpowich

The nominees are members of two VHA Professional Advisory Groups that developed, managed, and enhanced the use of computerized processes to conduct environmental compliance audits. CP-Track and E-SAFE are integral to ensuring continual improvement in environmental compliance at VA medical centers and to providing information needed to improve VA medical center GEMS programs.

Recycling | Paper Recycling at Robert J. Dole VA Medical and Regional Office Center

Kevin Anderson, Robert J. Dole VA Medical and Regional Office Center

The facility recognized that it discarded far too much paper as solid waste. The nominee implemented an aggressive paper recycling program which diverts greater than 10 tons per month from solid waste to recycling containers. The program currently saves more than \$26,000 annually by allowing the facility to modify existing solid waste contracts, and also generates more than \$200 per month in revenue from mixed, recycled paper. Savings from the program have resulted in funds available to purchase a badly needed mobile brush chipper. Eliminating the need for brush disposal frees up nearly \$12,000 a year on disposal costs of tree limbs and other wood waste, while producing mulch that can be used for landscaping or alternative energy production. This also has an added benefit of allowing the facility to remove an inherently dangerous dumpster from the property.

Recycling | Ethanol Recycling at Louisville VA Medical Center

Keith C. Davis, Louisville VA Medical Center

Ethanol is classified as a hazardous material by the Department of Transportation (DOT) and solid waste by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). Shipment and disposal of the material is very expensive because of these classifications. Mr. Davis identified a local Enterprise Zone (economically depressed) company, Parallel Products, which recycles ethanol beyond its useful state. He was able to capitalize on the reclassification of the ethanol by EPA when recycled by a process developed by the company. Under DOT classification, the ethanol is shipped as hazardous material instead of as hazardous waste, which reduces the overall cost of shipping. The cost of fuel blending or incineration has been quoted to the Louisville VAMC at \$237 for a 55-gallon drum. Parallel Products recycles the same ethanol into other useable products at a cost of \$1.00. This project encourages private industry and laboratories currently disposing of ethanol to look at recycling as an environmentally-sound alternative.

Waste/Pollution Prevention | Horizontal Well-Water Recirculation Irrigation System

Dick Kollar and Ed Carlos, Bay Pines National Cemetery

Horizontal wells are typically used to remove contaminants from shallow groundwater. Airports commonly use them where fuel storage and aircraft fueling result in groundwater pollution. Nominees Dick Kollar and Ed Carlos made innovative use of a horizontally drilled well system to recover the shallow groundwater under the burial area and reuse it. Before the system was installed, the cemetery irrigated every three days with City of Tampa water at \$2,000 per application. After installation, shallow groundwater was recaptured and used to re-irrigate the cemetery area. During FY 2006, this effort resulted in a 75 percent water-use reduction from 5.3 million gallons to 1.3 million gallons, a savings of 4 million gallons of water, and \$120,000 in water cost savings. As the use of fertilizer and pesticides is reduced, the introduction of pollutants into the aquifer or local waterways through runoff is also reduced.

Printed on  recycled paper

For more information about the VA Environmental Excellence Awards Program or the 2007 winners, visit <http://www1.va.gov/oamm/recycle>.

Department of Veterans Affairs Celebrates

Earth Day 2007



*Leading the way
to a healthier,
more sustainable environment*



Thursday, April 19, 2007

10:00 a.m.

G.V. "Sonny" Montgomery Veterans Conference Center

VA Central Office Room 230



*Leading the way
to a healthier,
more sustainable environment*

Thirty-seven years ago, Senator Gaylord Nelson (D-WI) launched Earth Day. His goal was to improve the quality of the environment by calling for political change through large-scale citizen action.

Senator Nelson succeeded beyond his wildest dreams when 20 million people across the country turned out to celebrate the first Earth Day on April 22, 1970. This, in turn, led to the passage of major legislation designed to protect the environment and to conserve natural resources.

In 1995, Senator Nelson received the Presidential Medal of Freedom, the nation's highest civilian award, for his exceptional environmental leadership. The accompanying proclamation from President Clinton read, in part, "As the father of Earth Day, he is the grandfather of all that grew out of that event: the Environmental Protection Act, the Clean Air Act, the Clean Water Act, the Safe Drinking Water Act."

Leading the way to a healthier, more sustainable environment is the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) theme for Earth Day 2007. This theme is reflected in the everyday actions of VA employees and facilities nationwide as they incorporate sound environmental management practices throughout their operations.

The winners and honorable mentions of the 2007 VA Environmental Excellence Awards Program have demonstrated outstanding leadership in environmental sustainable practice areas such as: waste/pollution prevention, recycling, green purchasing, electronics stewardship, and environmental management systems. VA takes this occasion to recognize their achievements.

Earth Day also provides an opportunity for VA to renew and strengthen its commitment to being a good steward of the air, water, land, and other natural and cultural resources. In this spirit, VA calls upon all employees and facilities to enhance their efforts to ensure a healthier, more sustainable environment for current and future generations.

To learn how you can support Earth Day and the environment every day at work, at home, at school, and in your community, visit the VA Office of Acquisition and Materiel Management's Environmental Affairs – Greening VA Web site at <http://www1.va.gov/oamm/recycle>.

Earth Day Program

Welcome

Mr. Robert McKenna
Director
Materiel Management Service

Introduction of Mr. Edwin Piñero

Federal Environmental Executive
Mr. Robert McKenna

Earth Day Remarks

Mr. Edwin Piñero

Introduction of Ms. Rita A. Reed

Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary for Management
Mr. Robert McKenna

2007 VA Environmental Excellence Awards Ceremony

Remarks

Ms. Rita A. Reed

Presentation of Awards

Ms. Rita A. Reed
Mr. Edwin Piñero

Closing Remarks

Mr. Robert McKenna

Green Purchasing and Recycling Awareness Fair

Light Refreshments

11:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.
VACO Room C-7

2007 VA Environmental Excellence Awards

The Department of Veterans Affairs congratulates each of the 2007 VA Environmental Excellence Award winners and honorable mentions. Their leadership in environmental initiatives serves as an example not only to their colleagues, but also to the federal community at-large.

Award Winners

Green Purchasing | Biobased Fluids Project Timothy Trittschuh, Fort Custer National Cemetery

Mr. Trittschuh spearheaded a pilot project to test biobased penetrating lubricants and oils, as well as bio-diesel fuels, used in heavy duty equipment at the Fort Custer National Cemetery. Biobased products are made from renewable plant and animal resources and are generally safer for human health and the environment than their petroleum-based counterparts. They also reduce the Nation's dependence on foreign oil. Mr. Trittschuh is a leader in testing biobased products in advance of the U.S. Department of Agriculture designating such products for federal agency purchase. This effort was featured by the United Soybean Board as a "Profile in Biobased Success" and in the White House *Closing the Circle News*.



Waste/Pollution Prevention | Reduction in Biohazardous Waste Generation VA San Diego Healthcare System

In FY 2005, the VA San Diego Healthcare System (VASDHS) generated an estimated 186,856 pounds of biohazardous waste. VASDHS utilized an innovative technology to significantly reduce "red bag" (infectious) waste at the facility. The installation of the Neptune Waste Management System resulted in the reduction of more than 12,000 pounds of red bag waste in just its first 10 months of use. The new technology provides a number of advantages, including improving worker health and safety and reducing environmental hazards and costs associated with handling, treating, and transporting infectious biomedical waste. In FY 2006, VASDHS realized an \$8,490 cost savings due to the reduced use of surgical canisters.

